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Greeting cards do business honors

It's common sense. Keeping in touch in today's business climate gives you a competitive edge. But where can you find a business-oriented greeting card?

PSI Research of Milpitas, Calif., markets a number of these portfolios, each with a variety of cards and postcards, under the product name Execards. This mail-order business offers dozens of greeting cards appropriate for numerous business situations. The cards help you stay in touch and provide a nice change of pace from normal business stationery.

Each portfolio, available for \$12.95, contains 15 greeting cards and five postcards. The three I reviewed are:

■ The Marketing Portfolio. This group is designed to be used with other marketing tools. Included are cards offering help, thank-you cards, cards that follow up on a meeting or show your appreciation for a referral. My favorite is a postcard that features a drawing of a gavel. On the other side, it de-



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clares: "You be the judge ... Give us a try." It may be just the thing that clinches a sale.

■ The Customer Recognition Portfolio. These cards let your customers know that you appreciate their business with text such as, "Thanks for your order" and "Glad we're doing business."

■ The Thank You Portfolio. This variety of cards comes in a number of classy styles, allowing you to choose the right one for the occasion.

These portfolios come in quite handy when you are impressed with the job a person has done and want to acknowledge it. You can immediately choose a card and give the credit.

PSI also offers a "personal

greetings" line for personnel departments or executives to use within their organizations. In addition to thank-you notes and birthday greetings, there are get-well cards, anniversary greetings and congratulatory messages for promotions and projects done well.

The greeting cards and postcards are printed on heavy, quality stock. The cards have professional-looking designs and come with nice envelopes.

The cards range from colorful and clever to more traditional, embossed designs, so you can choose one or several that fit the style of your company or your clients.

If you find one or two cards that you really like and use often, you can order bulk quantities from PSI's mail order catalog and keep them on hand.

Prices vary, ranging from 39 cents each for the postcards, to 89 cents each for the traditional embossed cards and \$3.50 a piece for an oversized, brightly colored "Thanks for your business" card

that comes with an attractive translucent envelope. Custom imprinting with your name or a personal message is available for a \$19 set-up fee and \$3 for 100 cards.

Discounts are considerable for large orders, but even so, these prices compare nicely with card shop prices. Not to mention the time you would otherwise spend shopping for greeting cards.

On the downside, you have to be careful not to use them too often. If you do, your clients may start to expect them, and this may detract from their novelty and impact.

The bottom line: Whether you're in management or marketing, these portfolios of greeting cards make it really easy to choose the right card for the right occasion and to be timely about it.

Hillel Segal's column has been broadened to include evaluations of gadgets, seminars and books designed to enhance business productivity. Segal is a management consultant based in Boulder.